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ABSTRACT

In a world where the population is increasing at an annual rate of 76 million, where food is in short supply, and where agricultural production is one of our largest capital generating sources, U.S. agriculture and the land base supporting it are vital. Rural America has been losing land at a rate of one and a half million acres a year due to soil erosion; subdivision, park, and recreational developments; new and reforestation projects; and the uncontrolled and unplanned quality of the U.S. growth ethic. Premiums on high energy requirements, "Green Revolution" technologies, spin-offs of urban limitations, and aggregations of rural land and capital have also contributed to the loss of farmable lands. Important rudimentary steps which must be taken include: (1) a National Land Invertory (assessment of: land potential; present and future energy requirements; reclamation; soil classification; crop yield value; and crop impact on the labor force, energy, and environment); (2) a freeze on the use of farm land for nonfarm purposes; and (3) efforts to influence the way land is owned and used (corporate legislation; extension of the Sherman-Clayton Act to cover agriculture; modifications of the current tax structure to prevent "tax-loss" agriculture relative to environmental conservation). (JC)

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Rural Land Use: Patterns and Proposals for Reform

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RURAL LAND USE: PATTERNS AND PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

> The face and character of our country
> are determined by what we do with
> America and its resources.
>
> Thomas Jefferson

Any discussion of land use planning must begin with a review of the ways in which we perceive our relationship with the land. That perception varies in America. It includes, of course, the accepted notions of private property. Within that realm land is viewed as a commodity, to be bought and sold and disposed of or despoiled at the whim and caprice of the landowner. That is a view which predominates in America.

There are, however, modifications of that view, if not approaches to land tenure which are inalterably opposed to the predominate form of land ownership and control. They include the farmer who loves farming and, while feeling strongly about his ownership of the land and his right to pass it on to his children, feels equally strongly that other land owners should not drive up property values and taxes so high that he can no longer afford to farm. He worries about big corporations and absentee owners buying the land. He hopes to leave his land in as good a condition, if not better, than when he first turned its soil.

There are other approaches to land tenure in America. Some Spanish-Americans in New Mexico and Colorado think in terms of communal lands. So do some people who are leaders in the back-to-the-land movement of the 1960's and 1970's, as well as many members of various rural religious communities. Southern sharecroppers, tenant farmers and migrant farm workers throughout the nation all have a unique perception of and attachment to the land. For people involved in the land movement there is an increasing awareness of the need for a stewardship of the land. Quality land, like so many of our resources, is diminishing in quantity. To ensure its continuing viability we must all become stewards of the land, and like the small farmer who works to protect and preserve his land for his children to farm after him, we must work also to provide an adequate land base for ourselves and our descendants.

Before beginning to detail what might be done to protect our land resource, it is useful to catalogue our land; its uses and its mis-uses.

THE LAND AND ITS USE

The fifty states in the United States have approximately 2264 million acres of land. That land is used for the following purposes:

Urban	35 million acres
Transportation	26 million acres (one mile of interstate highway consumes approximately 40 acres of land)
Recreation and Parks and Wildlife	81 million acres
Public Installations	35 million acres
Other	284 million acres (this includes such diverse items as swampland, electrical transmission line right-of-way and rivers and lakes)
Forest	724 million acres
Grassland	604 million acres (includes some land not in farms, mostly federal land)
Cropland	475 million acres (includes cropland pasture)

According to the United States Department of Agriculture this country has a land base for crop production of about 385 million acres. In 1974, after a number of years in which substantial amounts of agricultural lands were held out of production, all available lands were returned to cultivation. 326 million acres of cropland were harvested last year. 1/ The difference is made up of fallow lands and lands where, for one reason or another, crops failed.

In a period of growing uncertainty about the ability of the world to feed itself our abundant base of prime agricultural lands gives rural America a natural power base greater than that possessed by the OPEC nations. The United States enjoys a position in world agriculture unequaled by other countries. We contribute over 90 percent of all soybeans in world trade, 70 percent of the

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1/ Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, January, 1975.

grain and approximately 22 percent of all agriculture commodities traded on world markets. This agricultural abundance netted us some 20 billion dollars in foreign trade last year, a dramatic increase over recent years. That pays a substantial share of the 27 billion dollar bill we incurred for Arab oil.

Agriculture is so important to this nation that the Central Intelligence Agency, in a recent report entitled Food, Population and Climate, Trends to the Year 2000, predicts it will insure the United States of a "new hegemency." 1/ Our unique position on the globe, combined with trends toward colder temperatures in the northern hemisphere will give us a strength which will be unmatched in previous history; a strength due primarily to our agriculture.

Perhaps such speculation is premature, but it remains, that in a world where the population is increasing at an annual rate of 76 million, where food is in short supply, and where our agricultural production is one of the nation's largest capital generating sources, agriculture, and the land base which supports it are of vital importance.

The United States Department of Agriculture contends that we will need to bring an additional 98 million acres of land into production by the year 1985 in order to meet advancing demands for food and fiber both domestically and abroad. 2/

The capital costs of developing that much new land for crop production are staggering. Much of the land in question is marginal land or land on which the soil will require substantial upgrading in the form of fertilizers and water.

Meanwhile, we are loosing our prime agricultural lands from farm food production at a prodigious rate. In fact, the loss of farm land to other uses may be one of the greatest threats the world granaries, the world's farmers, and hungry people face.

LOSING GROUND

Rural America has been losing land at a rate of 1 and 1/2 million acres a year for the last several decades. California has recently been losing farm land at the rate of 600 acres per day. Elsewhere land is lost due to soil erosion, sub-divisions, park and recreational land development and new and re-forestation projects.

1/ Food, Population and Climate, Trends to the Year 2000, Central Intelligence Agency, August, 1974.

2/ E.R.S., United States Department of Agriculture, January, 1975.

Much of this loss of land from farming has come as a result of the uncontrolled and unplanned quality of our contemporary growth ethic. Speculators, hobby farmers, mining and energy companies have moved their meters and bounds markers wherever a quick buck could be made. They paid little regard to the impact they had upon the quality of rural life, and the quality of rural lands which they despoiled.

Leap-frog development of suburban areas has caused the farmer at the rural/urban border to face rapidly climbing property tax assessment. Property taxes that have risen 300 to 500 percent in some areas as a result of reclassification of farm land into land for potential urban development have driven some farmers out of farming and their land out of food production just as if it had been paved.

Elsewhere, the "no-growth" and "phased growth" movements exemplified by the activity in Ramapo, New York; Boulder, Colorado; and Petaluma, California, may, where they are constitutionally permissable, have the result of encouraging the construction of homes in rural areas. As smaller towns and cities attempt to limit the extent of their development, extra-urban areas which lack a planning process must cope with the sporadic spin-off of these urban limitations. While important catalysts for change, these movements need to become the focus for a larger planning process.

Recreational or second-home developments have, through poor planning and shoddy construction, lead to the over-use and destruction of rural lands and streams -- a sometimes fragile eco-system.

That fragile eco-system, our rural land base, has suffered from the environmental destruction wrought by current agricultural practices as well. High-yield "Green Revolution" technologies require tremendous inputs of fuel, fertilizer and water. There are several potential results. On occasion, soils that are too fragile for the use to which they are put, are burned out by too many fertilizer applications. The streams that run through these lands may suffer from atrophication.

The high energy requirements of our society put a premium on the extraction of fuel, coal and minerals which lie below fertile farm lands. Mining companies, owning mineral rights to Appalachian hill country or rolling northern plains, strip centuries of old soil from the surface of rural America to recover fuel for the machinery and motors of our urbanized society.

Perhaps one of the greatest threats to the viability of agricultural land is the growing aggregations of land and capital in rural America. "On a county-by-county basis, a Nader team found that the top 20 landowners in rural counties (i.e., a fraction of one percent of the population) generally owned 25 to 50

percent of the land." 1/ It is this concentration of land into fewer and fewer hands as well as the increasing number of absentee landowners (60 percent in Iowa and Illinois) which is one of the factors driving family farmers off the land and discouraging sons and daughters from continuing with farming, or new people from entering the profession. Generally, it is the large, often corporate landowner, who favors the capital and energy intensive varieties of agriculture which are so socially and environmentally destructive.

Below, on a national basis, are some of the major landowners and the acreages they control. For comparison, consider that the size of the state of New Jersey is 4.8 million acres.

Energy Companies	U.S. acreage (Including some offshore)
Standard Oil of Indiana	20.3 million
Texaco	9.9 million
Mobil	7.8 million
Gulf	7.5 million
Phillips Petroleum	5.3 million
Standard Oil of California	5.2 million
Continental Oil	4.5 million
Union Oil	4.1 million

Timber Companies	Holdings (acres)
International Paper	7.0 million
Weyerhauser	5.6 million
Georgia-Pacific	4.5 million
St. Regis	3.9 million
ITT (Rayonier)	2.1 million
U.S. Plywood-Champion	2.0 million
Scott	1.8 million
Boise-Cascade	1.8 million
Union Camp	1.6 million
Crown Zellerbach	1.6 million
Kimberly-Clark	1.5 million
Continental Can	1.4 million

1/ Quoted in Poverty in American Democracy, U. S. Catholic Conference, November, 1974.

Railroads	Surface and mineral rights (acres)
Burlington Northern	8.4 million
Union Pacific	7.9 million
Southern Pacific	5.1 million
St. Louis & San Francisco	1.4 million
Total:	145 million acres 1/

The total of this acreage is placed in perspective when compared to the 169 million acres in Texas.

In agriculture, the decade of the 1960's saw a large expansion of corporate involvement. Sometimes for the tax benefits associated with agriculture, and sometimes for the sake of diversification, corporations moved off Wall and Montgomery Streets and into the fields. Buying up small farms they are changing the character of much of rural America and the quality of the food we eat. Small town implement, fuel and fertilizer distributor/ dealers are unable to compete with a corporate giant like Tennaco which can buy tractors from its subsidiary corporation J. I. Case, Inc. to use on its subsidiary Kern County Land Company. The result: for every six small farmers who leave the farm, one supporting business in town closes down. And in the last decade America has lost one-fourth of its farms.

Responding to market forces and short run "management efficiencies", large farms encourage the development of mechanized means of harvesting crops, thereby avoiding labor problems and "simplifying production techniques". The resulting displacement of farm labor, from California tomato fields and Southern cotton fields, has been achieved at a social cost many times greater than the savings to agriculture through mechanization. Moreover, the nutrient quality of many new products - among them the infamous "hard tomato"- are of dubious worth.

Corporate agriculture, more than the family farmer who is concerned about the long-term quality of his soil and his production tends to follow the whims of the marketplace. For example, in 1975, in California alone, sugar beet acreage is increasing from 230,000 acres to 310,000 acres. Those 80,000 acres of increased sugar production cause the loss of quality food production land just as if it had been sub-divided. Sugar

1/ Ibid.

has no nutrient worth. Can land use planning - if it considers the merits of farming over sub-dividing - just as logically consider the merits of soybeans versus sugar beets?

Land ~~use issues~~ in this country may vary from region to region, but the underlying issue remains the same: land is being accumulated in the hands of the few and being despoiled to the disadvantage of the people at large.

New England -- In Maine, a dozen paper companies own more than half of the state. The demand for recreational land has lured developers into Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, eager to despoil the environment for a quick dollar. The family farm in New England is rapidly becoming a curiosity. In potatoes, blueberries and fishing, the corporation are taking over.

South -- As much as 100 million acres of the south is controlled directly or indirectly by large pulp and paper corporations. Equally startling is the continuing rate at which Black land ownership is decreasing. At its peak, around 1910, Blacks owned as much as 15 million acres of southern land. By 1950, black land ownership has declined to 12 million acres, and in 1969 it was down to 5.5 million acres.

Appalachia -- Absentee ownership of coal and power companies has left a legacy of destruction of not only the land of Appalachian region but also of the people who inhabit the area. Our energy hungry nation consumed nearly 30 million tons of Appalachian coal last year, but little of that was to the advantage of the people or the land which produced it. As many as one out of four families of the region are unemployed.

Southwest -- The major land issues in the Southwest concern former common lands, or ejidos, that were granted in perpetuity to the Hispanic communities by the Spanish and Mexican governments. Presently those lands are held by the United States Forest Service, which restricts their use. The actions of large corporations: power companies who would desecrate Indian lands at any cost in order to obtain the minerals located there, is another prominant issue

Midwest -- The midwest is an area where most of the land is still in private ownership, where mining has had only a limited impact thus far, and where the family-type farm is the basic unit. There are trends, however, toward bigness and corporate control. Some midwest states have taken steps to curb the corporate invasion, or at least expose it.

Northern Plains -- The strip mining of the northern plains, the destruction of farm and ranching land and Indian lands, the acquisition of water rights for the production of electricity and the industrialization of the Plains, and the influx of people into mobile shanty towns has all received great notoriety in the past months. It is one of the areas where the fiercest land battles will be fought.

West -- The land problem in the West is both environmental and economic. Open space in urban and suburban areas is fast disappearing and millions of acres of farmland are falling into the hands of developers. That land that is privately held is concentrated in the hands of a few large landowners. In California, the ten largest landowners own more than 12 percent of the privately held land. 1/

There are few people who would dispute the need for some variety of protection of rural America. Uncontrolled commercial, residential and industrial growth have worked to no one's advantage, except that of the speculator, and his lawyer and banker, who have only a short-term stake in his land transaction. Many people have a strong emotional opposition to government intrusion in the domain of private property. This opposition can be overcome in the face of an equally strong fear that if the government does not intrude, then other less accountable interests, such as land developers, and coal companies will.

There are a few people who contend that the forces of the marketplace will eventually act to protect our agriculture land base. When, if as the C.I.A. predicts, agricultural production becomes our big international trump card,then farm land will be so invaluable that playgrounds and freeways and perhaps even sub-divisions will have to retreat from the advance of the plow. Cities may have to contract as we gather every available piece of quality land for food production. Until that occurs however, there is much work to be done. We've all seen how the marketplace has worked in the past. There can be no reliance upon it in the future. It is presently working to the detriment of rural lands and rural communities. Much of what needs to be done falls under the heading of land use planning.

LAND USE PLANNING

There is a tremendous amount of activity in this country under the guise of land use planning. That plethora of activity,

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1/ People and Land, Vol. 1, Number 1, Summer, 1973.

uncoordinated and often conflicting, is a problem in itself. A preponderant amount of that activity has an urban focus.

States across the nation are beginning to focus attention on rural lands. The Governor's Ad Hoc Committee on Agricultural lands in Connecticut issued a report in January which made strong recommendations aimed at protecting the rural lands in that state. Likewise, state legislatures and planning groups in California, New York, Washington and Arkansas among others are giving all of their lands a hard look. But the ability of state and local groups to move rapidly and effectively against those who treat the land as a disposable commodity remains in doubt.

Among the many examples of devices to influence land use are the following:

Zoning -- There are several different zoning methods in use. Marshall Township, Minnesota, for example, has three classifications: (1) development, (2) holding, where the land is under review, and (3) agricultural, where only farming is allowed. In Marin County, California, there is a system of Down-Zoning. Land that was formerly zoned for 7800 square foot lots is being down-zoned to a 10 to 20 acre lot minimum.

Urban Limit Lines, used to keep development out of agricultural areas are being used in isolated instances in Kentucky, in Sacramento, California, and in Salem, Oregon. San Luis Obispo County, California, looks at the productivity of its land before zoning. Grazing lands are zoned for 1,000 acre minimums, while prime lands suitable for intensive production have a low 5 to 10 acre limitation on size.

In situations where land is placed in special agricultural zones, the farmer is often left without the ability to sell his land for a high capital gain at the time of his retirement from active farming. He may also lose access to some of his borrowing power. Some states are beginning to consider the need, therefore, for the purchase by the state of the development rights to the farmers' land. If society at large feels it is important to perserve prime agricultural lands for agricultural purposes, then society, not just an individual farmer, must bear that burden. Hence, the state should stand ready under such a system to purchase the development rights of farmers who might contemplate the sale of lands.

Another approach to the subject involves the transferrable development right or "T.D.R." Under the T.D.R. plan each land owner would possess a certain number of development rights. They

would be pegged to the quantity and the quality of his land. If a farmer in the area wanted to sub-divide his land, he would have to buy development rights from surrounding farmers in order to acquire enough rights to proceed with his project. Only a few plots of land in an area could be subdivided under such a plan... and everyone would reap a portion of the financial reward. Hence, the T.D.R., an approach now being attempted in Suffolk County, Long Island.

Taxation -- Our system of taxation has worked to the detriment of small farmers and rural America. Through the deduction of capital costs and capital gains treatment of sales proceeds the internal revenue code has encouraged corporate, hobby and absentee farming and landholding.

To date, a total of 38 states have some form of property tax relief for farmers. 27 of them tie the tax relief to maintainence of open space. 11 states require rural land holders who wish preferential tax treatment to sign contracts which provide for penalties for their violation. These so-called agricultural preserve acts, are designed to shield farmers from onerous property taxes -- for on the average, farmers pay a higher proportion of their incomes for property taxes than does the population as a whole. "In 1971, for example, property tax on farm property amounted to an estimated 7.6 percent of income while for the population at large, it was only 4.4 percent." 1/ Many of these agriculture preserve plans have not met with favor. They remove land from local tax rolls, or at least they reduce the tax base of the local county. They can extract a penalty from an individual who breaches his contract to keep his land within the preserve for the specified length of time (10 to 20 years), by requiring the payment of back taxes. And they sometimes require that the tract be a minimum size and that a minimum dollar yield be produced per acre. Clearly the movement toward agricultural preserves deserves scrutiny and the legislation requires improvement. One of the most effective approaches for shielding farmers from high property taxation is the "circuit-breaker" system. When the property tax exceeds a certain percentage of personal income this program breaks in and the state gives a rebate on the state personal income tax or, if no tax is paid, a rebate is paid out of the general state treasury. In Michigan, the circuit-breaker is tied to a system of state and local planning, which attempts to involve all of the various interest groups. Governor Milliken said when he signed the measure, "The impact will be felt most immediately by those farmers living in areas of the state where real estate development is forcing land values up, but in a larger sense it will be felt all across the state and for generations to come as we reap the benefits of keeping food-producing land in operation."

1/ Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Information Bulletin #74-8.

If the Michigan plan works it may be a model for other jurisdictions. There is a provision of the Internal Revenue Code which oddly is acting, in limited instances, as an aid to the preservation of farming lands. Section 501(c)(3) of the code governs the rights and responsibilities of certain non-profit corporations. People have incorporated themselves, gained their non-profit status from the IRS and are beginning to encourage people to donate land and/or money to the incorporated land trust. The trust is committed to maintaining the land. It leases the land, to farmers at reasonable rates. But because of the non-profit aspects of the trust, the land is not taxed and the person who donates land to the trust receives tax advantages from that transaction as well.

Modeled after the example of the Jewish National Trust -- the Moschav -- people can obtain long-term inheritable leases from a land trust. The Northern California Land Trust is hoping to use its small, but growing, land base as the vehicle for helping people get out of the farm labor pool and live and produce on their own land -- land owned by the trust, yet theirs to work and theirs to pass on to their children.

Another similar land use planning device is the land bank. Already popular in British Columbia and Prince Edwards Island in Canada, and recently proposed by the Farmers Union for North Dakota, the land bank system provides for the purchase by the state of farm lands. Instead of having a retiring farmer or his estate put a farm on the market in a distress sale, the state buys the land and then leases or sells it to a younger farmer. Through the land bank, which may be either a state or quasi-state corporation, land can be controlled for its best use.

Interestingly, both the land trust and the land bank are methods for avoiding the damaging aspects of the current estate tax laws. There are many small farmers in America who will only own their farms free and clear when they die and the life-insurance clause on the mortgage contract pays off the remainder due to the local bank. Perhaps a modification is due in the system which forces the children of many family farmers to sell off the family farm to pay the estate taxes.

Legislative action impacting on land use -- There are several draft pieces of legislation which, if enacted would have a considerable impact upon the ways in which rural lands are held and used. Among them are: the proposed Family Farm Anti-Trust Act sponsored by Senator James Abourezk and Senator Gaylord Nelson. First proposed in 1971, the bill would extend the anti-trust prohibitions of the Sherman-Clayton Act to include the vertically integrated corporation operating within the domain of agriculture. At the present time, agriculture is exempted from Sherman-Clayton, giving rise to the problems and anti-competitive

tendencies inherent in Tenneco, Bud Antle and other large corporate farming enterprises. The passage of the Family Farm Act could help stem the tide toward larger and larger aggregations of land and capital in rural America.

Another legislative device, this one with a more direct impact upon rural lands, was enacted in Minnesota in May of 1973. Its various features place constraints upon the participation of corporations in agriculture through limitations upon the amount of capitalization, number of shareholders, and percentage of non-farm revenue a corporation involved in agriculture is allowed to have. Those corporations exceeding the parameters of the legislation are required to divest the excess of their holdings. Similar legislation, although not nearly so broad, has existed in other states in the region since the latter part of the 19th century.

Elsewhere, in California, in the cases U.S. v. Imperial Immigration District and Yellen v. Hickel,rural advocates have been waging a legal battle to gain enforcement of a provision of the 1902 Reclamation Act which limits the amount of acreage a person can hold in an area irrigated under the Act to 160 acres. It prescribes certain residency requirements as well. So far their efforts have met with stalling tactics and little more than a foot in the legal door. While 160 acres is insufficient for many types of farming operations, in the lush, irrigated valleys of central California it is more than ample. Perhaps this seldom noted legislative provision can be applied elsewhere.

Pending Federal Legislation -- Two pieces of legislation that have great potential impact upon rural land are the recently introduced Land Use Planning bill, HR. 4342, and the Strip-mining bill, HR. 25.

The Land Use Planning bill would provide for a mechanism for channeling resources to state planning agencies, enabling them to better manage their local lands. Additionally, it provides for the coordination of federal land use programs under the auspices of the Department of the Interior. The bill is not as thorough as one would hope, and it places Federal authority in the hands of an agency with a poor track record. Even so, the bill is meeting with opposition from the Ford Administration.

The Strip-mining bill, while providing for minimum standards for surface mining and reclamation has, according to some critics, numerous loopholes which fail to protect much of rural America. Representative Ken Hechler of West Virginia feels the bill is "wishy-washy", fails to protect people and falls short of some current state standards. The bill is, however, a beginning.

NEED FOR ACTION

It is apparent that a number of competing forces are at work dividing up, protecting and managing America's rural land resources. If we hope to protect this diminishing national natural resource -- our abundant prime farm lands -- and if we hope to ensure the renewed viability of the quality of rural life, then we can only approach the subject of land use planning in a comprehensive manner. A piece-meal approach runs the risk of leaving gaping holes through which drag lines, freeways, and corporate tomato harvesters can flow.

Short of an idealized solution to the current whimsical way in which we treat our land, and the ways in which powerful interest groups manipulate its use, there are some important rudimentary steps which must be taken.

First, we need a National Land Inventory. That inventory should include a number of items:

1) An inventory, by ownership, of all rural lands including prime agricultural lands, dry pasture lands and arable lands.

2) An inventory of all potentially prime agricultural lands.

3) A technical assessment of what lands are best suited for what use, based upon such disparate indicators as climate, soil capability, water supply, market demand and the impact upon the surrounding area of a potential use.

4) A technical assessment of present and, insofar as possible, future energy requirements of the land according to the use patterns in practice.

5) An inventory of potentially prime agricultural lands which were converted to a non-farm use and could be reclaimed.

6) An assessment of the agricultural lands in question to include:

a) soil classification

b) crop yield value in nutrient/protein terms

c) crop impact on labor force, energy, and the environment.

Second, until the inventory, which should improve our ability to make better judgments about the use of our rural lands, there should be a freeze on the use of farm lands for non-farm purposes, unless that use is necessary to protect the public health, welfare and safety.

Third, while waiting for a comprehensive inventory of America's land, we should all become more involved in the land use process. It is a field that should not be left to the professional planners. The growing sense of land stewardship, a part of the fledgling land reform movement in America, should be fostered. The question, "Is it possible that land reform is needed in the United States?" asked in a recent publication of the U.S. Catholic Conference, 1/ must be asked again and again and answered by more people in the affirmative.

and Fourth, we must continue to work on new and innovative ways of influencing the ways land is owned and used in America. That may include:

a) efforts to initiate and pass legislation in the several states which limit corporate participation in agriculture.

b) work on an extension of the Sherman-Clayton Act to cover agricultural production.

c) modifications of the current tax structure which encourage "tax-loss" agriculture and non-farm and corporate participation in the economy of rural America, as well as modifications in existing estate and property tax structures to favor family farms.

d) requiring research by land grant colleges and university focused upon intermediate technologies which are economically applicable to smaller units of rural land and capital.

e) encouragement of a new perception of food and agriculture which gauges success in terms of the benefits to the land through the maintenance of its organic quality and agricultural yields in nutrient and net-energy terms rather than profits.

1/ Poverty in American Democracy, A Study of Social Power, U. S. Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C., November, 1974.

The opening paragraph of the Declaration of Principles adopted at the plenary session of the First National Conference on Land Reform provides a goal for our activities. It states:

> Land is a precious and finite resource and the birthright of the people. Its ownership and control, and the associated economic and political power, must be widely distributed. 1/

1/ People and Land, Volume 1, Number 1, Summer, 1973.